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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7295  
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0994  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4546  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8085  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5646  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1459  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1409  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000194

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO  
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: BURMA: GAMBARI TO PROPOSE A "TIME-OUT FOR  
SANCTIONS"

REF: RANGOON 185

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Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) Summary: Special Envoy Gambari was unhappy with the short time-frame of his recent visit to Burma, and pushed hard to extend his stay and expand his schedule. The Senior General refused to grant him meetings with any of the regime's senior leadership, but did allow him to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi for a second time. He granted Gambari a private meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Kyaw Thu, during which Gambari received a "positive" message from "higher levels," which he believed would allow him to continue his good offices mission. The regime is trying to link any progress to removal of international sanctions. UN Resident Representative Dan Baker believes Gambari will suggest that the U.S. and the EU offer a "time-out" from sanctions to call the regime's bluff, and to give the GOB a timetable by which they must deliver substantive progress. End summary.

12. (C) UN Resident Representative Dan Baker (PROTECT) gave pol/econ chief an informal briefing on the Gambari visit. Baker described Gambari as unhappy with the short time frame the GOB allotted for the visit. He pushed hard to extend the trip and expand his schedule to include a meeting with one of Burma's top three ruling generals, an additional private meeting with the Foreign Minister, and a meeting with the 1990 MPs-elect. His request was denied by Than Shwe, who consented to let him stay only one additional day, and only allowed him to meet once more with The Spokes Authoritative Team, to hold a private meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Kyaw Thu, and meet a second time with Aung San Suu Kyi.

13. (C) Baker said that, like his previous visits, Gambari did not receive his schedule until the beginning of each day, and still the officials often changed the order of his meetings. Baker claimed that Gambari did not discuss with him any of the content of his meetings with Aung San Suu Kyi, but described her as flexible, positive, and courageous. "The problem is not on her side," Gambari reported to Baker.

¶4. (C) Baker said that after his private meeting with Deputy FM Kyaw Thu, Gambari told him he had received a "positive" message from "higher levels," of the GOB, but he would not specify from whom. Gambari elaborated only that there seemed now to be a possibility to continue his good offices mission. Baker requested that, in light of this development, the USG refrain from pronouncing final judgment on Gambari's efforts before the Special Envoy had a chance to fully brief UNSYG Ban Ki Moon and the UN Security Council.

¶5. (C) Baker noted the GOB's singular focus on international sanctions during Gambari's visit. Baker related that Gambari had opened his meetings with the Minister of Planning and the Minister of Health by pleading that sanctions not be discussed during the sessions, as neither Gambari nor the UN had enacted the Sanctions. Gambari then outlined his proposed "National Economic Forum." Minister of Planning Soe Tha ignored Gambari's request, and instead used the meeting to blame all of Burma's ills on the snctions. Soe Tha rejected Gambari's proposal aslong as sanctions remained in place. Gambari repoded that he could not do anything about sanctons, but asserted that the GOB could by responding to the international community's demands. If theregime did not want the UN to establish the National Economic Forum, Gambari could not force them, although he believed it would help Burma and its people. Baker added that Gambari was surprised at the GOB's rejection of the National Economic Forum because he had proposed the idea to Burma's neighbors during his recent trips to the region. All had responded positively, including China, whose officials had promised to urge the regime to accept the proposal.

¶6. (C) Baker believes the regime is reluctant to establish the Forum because it would require both candid data, which the GOB is reluctant to release, and structural reform that would threaten the generals' power. Regarding sanctions,

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Baker believed that Gambari would suggest that the United States and the EU offer a "time-out" from any new sanctions in order to call the regime's bluff, and to give the GOB a timetable by which they must deliver substantive progress.

¶7. (C) Comment: The conditions for lifting international sanctions have been outlined to the regime many times, including during the Beijing talks last June. Than Shwe is demanding everything before delivering anything in an effort to divert attention from his obstructionism, and switch blame for the failure of Gambari's mission from him to the U.S. and its sanctions policy. All the more reason further discussions should drop the economic forum and focus exclusively on the need to open a closed political process to meet international standards and release the still growing number of political prisoners. End comment.  
VILLAROSA